United Nations S/2002/679

Security Council

Distr.: General
19 June 2002

Original: English

Fourteenth report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone

I. Introduction

1. By its resolution 1400 (2002) of 28 March 2002, the Security Council extended the mandate of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) for a period of six months, until 30 September 2002. In that resolution, the Council also requested me to submit, before 30 June 2002, an interim report assessing the post-electoral situation and the prospects for peace consolidation in Sierra Leone. The present report is submitted pursuant to that request and describes the priorities for UNAMSIL in the months ahead.

II. Elections

2. The Sierra Leone presidential and Parliamentary elections were held as scheduled on 14 May. The special election to facilitate voting by the military, police and electoral personnel who were to be on duty on polling day took place earlier, on 10 May, and the election of the parliamentary representatives of paramount chiefs was held on 10 June.

3. A total of 9 political parties, including the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) Party (RUFP), fielded presidential candidates, and 11 parties contested the parliamentary election. President Kabbah won 70.06 per cent of the presidential votes, while Ernest Koroma of the All People's Congress came in second with 22.35 per cent, and the former leader of the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC)/ex-Sierra Leone Army (SLA), Johnny Paul Koroma, ended up in third place with 3 per cent. The RUFP candidate received 1.7 per cent of the votes. President Kabbah was sworn in on 19 May, and on 21 May he announced a new Cabinet, which consisted only of persons affiliated with his political party.

4. Three political parties managed to win parliamentary seats. President Kabbah's Sierra Leone People's Party won 83 of the 124 seats, the All People's Congress won 27 seats, and Johnny Paul Koroma's Peace and Liberation Party won 2 seats. The remaining 12 parliamentary seats were filled by representatives of paramount chiefs, who were elected on 10 June, as indicated above.

5. The voting, on both 10 and 14 May, as well as on 10 June, was conducted in a remarkably peaceful atmosphere. No incidents of violence were reported. According to the National Electoral Commission, a total of 1,907,465 votes were cast in the presidential and parliamentary elections, representing 81 per cent of the registered voters.

6. The electoral campaigning, which started on 5 April and ended on 11 May, was generally peaceful. However, on the last day of campaigning, supporters of the ruling Sierra Leone People's Party and RUF clashed during rallies in Freetown, resulting in injuries to 16 people. As the Sierra Leone police were overwhelmed by the crowd, UNAMSIL had to deploy a platoon of 30 soldiers, who effectively dispersed the crowd. Thereafter, there were no further disturbances in Freetown, nor in the districts.

7. A total of 207 electoral observers from the Commonwealth, the European Union, the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Carter Centre, as well as some 3,500 local observers fielded by 18 Sierra Leonean civil society groups and the Council of

02-42779 (E) 210602

Churches of Sierra Leone, observed the elections. The observers characterized the elections as free, transparent and generally violence-free. Some technical and logistical difficulties were cited, in particular in connection with inadequate voter education and names missing from voters' registers, but it was noted that these did not mar the elections. All the opposition political parties, including RUFP, accepted the election results and announced their commitment to working with President Kabbah in rebuilding the country.

United Nations role in the elections

8. UNAMSIL temporarily redeployed 11,000 troops to some 200 high-risk areas throughout the country, and assisted the Sierra Leone police in deploying 4,400 police personnel as well as mobile armed units to provide security for the elections. In addition, the Mission provided critical logistical support to the National Electoral Commission. Together with the United Nations country team, UNAMSIL extended logistical assistance to the national and international electoral observers. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) funded the deployment of 30 observers from ECOWAS and OAU and procured 12,000 ballot boxes, as well as vital communications equipment for the National Electoral Commission and the police. UNAMSIL's electoral component closely monitored the various stages of the electoral process and reported on key issues, which enabled my Special Representative to advise the National Electoral Commission on rectifying shortcomings.

9. The deployment of an additional 30 United Nations civilian police personnel to UNAMSIL greatly enhanced the assistance provided by the Mission to the Sierra Leone police in developing their operational plan for the elections. The Mission's Public Information Section supplemented the National Electoral Commission's voter education efforts and on polling day deployed reporters to all electoral districts, while Radio UNAMSIL provided 24-hour coverage of the elections. On polling day, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and his two deputies separately visited polling stations countrywide and advised National Electoral Commission officials on resolving arising problems. UNAMSIL's military and civilian personnel visited a total of 4,700 out of the established 5,256 polling stations to monitor events on polling day.

III. Post-election security situation

10. The successful conduct of the elections marked the end of the second phase of UNAMSIL's military concept of operations for 2002, whose main objective was to provide effective security and logistical support for the elections. At the end of the elections, UNAMSIL troops redeployed to their previous 39 locations and continued to mount robust patrols to deter any possible disturbances. The Mission is currently implementing the third phase of the concept of operations, focusing on sustaining the prevailing stability and monitoring how the newly elected Government, as well as the army and police, consolidate their authority.

11. The overall security situation in Sierra Leone has remained generally stable in the wake of the elections. However, continuing protests by ex-combatants, who are dissatisfied with the late payment of their allowances, have created tension in some areas. Civil Defence Forces combatants demanding certain benefits from the Government have also caused disturbances, particularly in Moyamba. In addition, friction between returning populations and ex-combatants, involving disputes over illegally occupied houses, and relations between former RUF combatants and their erstwhile comrades who have joined the ruling party, have been a source of tension in the volatile Tongo and Kailahun areas. UNAMSIL troops have provided support to the Sierra Leone police in containing disturbances, while military observers and civil affairs officers have mediated in disputes over illegally occupied houses.

12. Some political parties have complained to UNAMSIL about harassment by supporters of the ruling party. Although these reports could not be verified, UNAMSIL has expressed concern to the Government that such acts could be a source of destabilization. The results of the special elections, which appeared to indicate that the armed forces personnel voted in large numbers for former AFRC/ex-SLA leader Johnny Paul Koroma, also raised fears about possible retaliation against these personnel and created widespread anxiety about their loyalty to the Government. To address these concerns, President Kabbah toured army deployment locations across the country and assured them that they would not be penalized for exercising their right to vote for a candidate of their choice. Senior army officers

subsequently met with the President and pledged the loyalty of the armed forces to the Government.

13. The escalating conflict in Liberia is increasingly affecting the stability of the areas along the border in Sierra Leone. On several occasions, elements from both the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) and Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD) raided Sierra Leonean villages while foraging for food. There is concern that such incidents could increase as the rainy season approaches. A number of Liberian soldiers have also approached UNAMSIL and Sierra Leone army deployment locations to seek refuge from the fighting in Liberia. In addition, the Government of Sierra Leone has expressed concern about the possible existence of armed Liberian elements among the large number of refugees fleeing into the southern and eastern districts of the country.

14. The Sierra Leone army has reinforced its deployments in the border areas to prevent incursions by both LURD and AFL elements. However, the effectiveness of the army is limited by logistical shortcomings, which are likely to be aggravated by the rainy season. UNAMSIL has also increased ground and air patrols in these areas to deter incursions. The UNAMSIL Force Commander met with the Liberian Defence Minister at Bo Waterside on 28 May and urged him to take measures to prevent AFL incursions. My Special Representative has also met with the leaders of Senegal, Nigeria, Ghana and Mali, as well as the Executive Secretary of ECOWAS, to draw their attention to the threat posed by the conflict in Liberia to the progress achieved in Sierra Leone.

IV. Looking ahead after the elections

15. In its resolution 1400 (2002), the Security Council emphasized the importance of the continuing support of UNAMSIL to the Government of Sierra Leone in the consolidation of peace and stability after the elections. In this regard, UNAMSIL is concentrating on maintaining a security environment that will allow the Government to firmly establish its authority, and is addressing the unfinished aspects of the peace process, which include the reintegration of ex-combatants, the consolidation of State authority throughout the country and the promotion of justice, human rights and national reconciliation. For its part, the United Nations country team is addressing issues related to national recovery and building the capacity of the Government to deliver critical services to the population, especially in the provinces. In this context, UNAMSIL and the Secretariat have identified the priorities set out below, which must be tackled urgently in the coming months in order to consolidate the peace, while the United Nations country team has developed a draft strategy for supporting recovery efforts.

Security issues

16. Security will remain a paramount concern until the capacities and reliability of Sierra Leone's security institutions are sufficiently developed to enable them to sustain, on their own, the security environment created by the presence of UNAMSIL. As indicated in my last report (S/2002/267), I intend to submit, in my September report to the Security Council, detailed proposals concerning the gradual downsizing of UNAMSIL and its eventual exit from Sierra Leone. In this connection, the Secretariat dispatched a military team to Sierra Leone from 9 to 14 June to assist UNAMSIL in developing these proposals. A crucial element in planning for the anticipated adjustments in the military component of UNAMSIL is the strengthening of the capacities, accountability and loyalties of both the police and the army of Sierra Leone, as well as the establishment of an effective coordination mechanism with UNAMSIL, in order to avoid a security vacuum when UNAMSIL eventually withdraws.

17. The Sierra Leone police are now a much-improved force as a result of the training provided by the United Nations civilian police component and the Commonwealth police training team, as well as the equipment provided by the Government of the United Kingdom and UNDP. However, the force still faces serious capacity problems and resource constraints. The force levels have to be increased to at least pre-war strength (9,000, from the current 6,000), the training of personnel needs to be enhanced and support equipment improved. The expansion of the force is currently unfunded, and training facilities are inadequate. The police presence in the districts is unevenly spread and poorly equipped. In order to address these issues, the United Nations civilian police will work together with the leadership of the Sierra Leone police and the Commonwealth team to develop a work plan that identifies critical security challenges and key priorities to enable the police to assume primary responsibility

for internal security over the next 12 to 18 months, as part of the overall strategy for the gradual disengagement of UNAMSIL.

18. With regard to the Sierra Leone army, it is clear that the Government will continue to rely heavily on the training assistance provided by the United Kingdom and the International Military Advisory and Training Team. The army has completed its deployments to permanent garrison locations across the country. However, the sustainability of these deployments is a matter of concern. The rudimentary state of the permanent garrison locations, the makeshift character of their accommodation and the poor state of the roads for resupply combine to decrease their effectiveness.

19. As planning for the adjustments in UNAMSIL's military presence proceeds, the Mission is closely monitoring the effectiveness and conditions of the Sierra Leone army, and will coordinate and consult closely with the Government and the leadership of the army on the security implications of its drawdown plans. In addition, it will be important to ensure that the future plans regarding the army, as well as the plans for the recruitment and training of the police, are synchronized with UNAMSIL's drawdown plans in order to achieve the principal goal of avoiding a security vacuum after the departure of the Mission.

Effective reintegration of ex-combatants

20. A total of 6,490 former combatants have so far completed the reintegration process, and an additional 20,628 are currently participating in reintegration projects in the agricultural sector, as well as in vocational training, formal education and small enterprises. Of these, 566 are in child-reintegration projects. Under the current plans, it is envisaged that up to 7,000 ex-combatants will be recruited for reintegration projects every six months. However, the programme is still plagued by a shortfall of $13.4 million in funding, as well as limited opportunities and administrative shortcomings on the part of the National Commission for Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration. The ex-combatants awaiting reintegration opportunities represent a potential threat to stability. As indicated earlier, some of the ex-combatants have held demonstrations in several parts of the country, protesting non-payment of allowances.

21. UNAMSIL, UNDP and the Governments of the United Kingdom, the United States and Japan are supporting stopgap projects to occupy some of the ex-combatants until long-term reintegration opportunities are available. In the coming months, a total of 33 such projects are expected to provide short-term support to some 2,000 ex-combatants. In addition to implementing these projects, UNAMSIL will continue to advise the National Commission for Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration on how to overcome its operational shortcomings, as well as encourage it to ensure a balanced geographical spread of reintegration opportunities. The Mission will also monitor ex-combatants, most of whom still live together as groups in potentially volatile areas such as Tonkolili, Kono, Kailahun and Kenema districts.

Extension of State authority

22. The restoration of effective local government structures remains vital to the stabilization of the many areas that were not controlled by the Government during the conflict. Since the completion of the disarmament process in January, UNAMSIL, UNDP and international partners have facilitated the deployment of Government administrators and the police in all districts. Most paramount chiefs have also returned to their chiefdoms. However, there are serious capacity constraints, especially in the newly accessible areas, that will require major investments in staffing, training and equipment over several years.

23. In order to support the Government in addressing some of these issues, UNDP has provided assistance for the drafting of new local government legislation, which is expected to be adopted by the new Parliament. UNAMSIL will continue to work closely with the Government, UNDP and donors to help restore basic administrative capacity and to monitor shortcomings that may undermine local stability. In order to strengthen UNAMSIL's effectiveness in this regard, it will be necessary, as adjustments are made in the composition of the Mission in the coming months, to ensure that the Mission's Civil Affairs component is staffed with personnel who have expertise in public administration; they would be deployed in the districts to support and provide advice to local government administrators on capacity-building.

Governance issues

24. A particular challenge will be to address the long-standing problems of the judicial system in Sierra Leone. This will require a comprehensive and sustained effort on the part of the Government, with the support of the international community, towards the rebuilding of an impartial, transparent and independent judiciary. The Government has appointed chairmen for all local courts as well as justices of the peace, who would handle minor civil and criminal cases. However, only 5 of the 14 magistrate courts in the country are currently functioning, albeit with very limited capacity in terms of trained personnel and logistics. UNAMSIL, UNDP and the Government of the United Kingdom are now coordinating their efforts to facilitate the early extension of judicial coverage through the provision of logistical support and the immediate rehabilitation of key infrastructures.

25. The actions and policies of the newly elected Government will be crucial to the efforts to consolidate the peace and sustain stability. In particular, it is vital for the Government to maintain a culture of tolerance that allows continued peaceful political competition. In this connection, it may be recalled that one of the principal objectives of the Sierra Leone peace process was to integrate RUF into the political mainstream. In the light of RUFP's failure in the elections, a major challenge for the Government will be to find ways of keeping that party engaged in the democratic process. UNAMSIL will therefore continue to encourage the inclusion in the political process of not only RUFP, but also other minority parties. To this end, my Special Representative intends to facilitate the continuation of the healthy political dialogue that was a key factor in reaching national consensus on elections. It is also important for both the Government and the international community to continue to encourage the RUFP leadership to continue to develop their political party.

Promoting human rights, national reconciliation and justice

26. UNAMSIL's Human Rights Section continued to conduct investigations into past human rights abuses and grave breaches of international humanitarian law. The Section is in the process of analysing testimony from more than 150 victims of war-related amputations, more than two thirds of whom were purposely mutilated. In addition, preliminary investigations into the existence of mass graves were carried out in the districts of Kailahun, Port Loko, Koinadugu and Bombali. On 20 May, the Mission opened a fourth regional human rights office in Koidu.

27. Progress was made on the establishment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission during the reporting period. The interim secretariat of the Commission, staffed by an Executive Secretary, three international advisers and six national advisers, began functioning on 25 March. On 13 May, President Kabbah announced the appointment of the four national and three international Commissioners. However, the inauguration of the Commission, which, under the relevant statute, was supposed to take place on 1 June, had to be postponed because of difficulties in mobilizing funding. To date, of the $10 million budgeted for the Commission, only $1.2 million has been pledged.

28. Further steps have also been taken towards the establishment of the Special Court for Sierra Leone. In May, Mr. Robin Vincent (United Kingdom) was appointed Acting Registrar of the Special Court, pending consultation with the President of the Court, and Mr. David Crane (United States) was appointed Prosecutor. The candidates for judgeships, nominated by their respective States of nationality, are being interviewed with a view to their appointment and assignment to either the Trial or the Appeals Chambers. In Sierra Leone, the Special Court Agreement, 2002 (Ratification) Act, was enacted by Parliament as implementing legislation. The powers and competences of the Special Court have thus been given legal effect in the national legal system of Sierra Leone.

29. The financial arrangements and accounting procedures for the transfer of contributions from the Trust Fund to the Special Court are still under consideration. The Financial Regulations and Rules and the Staff Regulations and Rules of the Special Court, based on the United Nations Financial and Staff Regulations and Rules and adapted to the circumstances of the Special Court, have been provisionally approved by the Management Committee subject to further consideration. The conclusion of a loan agreement between the United Nations and the Special Court for the release of personnel to the Special Court is still pending.

30. It is anticipated that, with the conclusion of the financial arrangements and the loan agreement, the Acting Registrar and an advance team will in the very near future be able to establish a core presence in Sierra Leone, lay the financial and administrative basis for the start-up phase of the Court's operation, begin the process of recruiting personnel and conclude an agreement with UNAMSIL on the terms and conditions of its cooperation with the Special Court in the provision of administrative and logistical support. The Prosecutor, with an advance team of investigators and prosecutors, will then launch the investigative and prosecutorial process.

31. UNAMSIL support for bodies dealing with past abuses, such as the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the Special Court, will continue to be a top priority. The Mission will seek to link these initiatives for truth, justice, redress and reconciliation with the rebuilding of institutions of the rule of law and with the reform of law and justice in the post-conflict situation. Human rights training and capacity-building programmes will be conducted with, inter alia, the police, the judiciary, the legal profession, civil administration, traditional authorities, the human rights community and, through the media, the general public.

Regional issues

32. As indicated in paragraphs 13 and 14 above, the conflict in Liberia threatens to undermine the progress achieved in Sierra Leone. UNAMSIL is therefore closely monitoring developments in the border areas and initiating contacts with Liberian security officials, as well as the leaders of the subregion, aimed at averting a spillover of the conflict into Sierra Leone. Developments in Liberia constitute one of the key factors being taken into account in the ongoing planning for the drawdown of UNAMSIL.

V. Transition to national recovery

33. In order to ensure a coordinated and complementary approach to the ongoing recovery process, in May the National Recovery Committee adopted the first volume of a national recovery strategy, covering the newly accessible districts in the eastern and northern parts of the country. The strategy focuses on immediate actions to address essential needs of the population, while laying the foundation for the transition towards sustainable development. Aimed at promoting stability in the country, it sets priorities in six major areas, namely, the restoration of civil authority; improvement in the delivery of basic social services; facilitating resettlement and reintegration; promotion of reconciliation and rights; stimulating economic revival; and improving access. As indicated in paragraph 15 above, the United Nations country team has also prepared a draft peace-building and recovery strategy that outlines how the humanitarian and development branches of the United Nations can contribute cohesively to the recovery process.

34. A central aspect of the recovery process is the facilitation of the resettlement of internally displaced persons and returning refugees. They are returning to areas that are among the poorest and most devastated, and where concentrations of ex-combatants are high. The third phase of the national resettlement programme commenced on 28 March and ran through 30 April, at which point operations were suspended for the election period. Some 120,000 internally displaced persons were resettled in the newly accessible areas during this phase. The fourth phase, under which 13,000 people are expected to be resettled, started in the first week of June. UNAMSIL and the International Organization for Migration have provided transportation support for moving these returning populations, as well as returning refugees.

35. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees has expanded the resettlement of returnees to chiefdoms in Kono and Kailahun districts. Since March, more than 30,000 returnees have been resettled and more than 15,500 Sierra Leonean refugees repatriated (about 7,500 from Guinea and about 8,000 from Liberia). At present, approximately 22,000 returnees continue to reside in temporary settlements or host communities, in one chiefdom in Pujehun district. It is estimated that about 165,000 Sierra Leonean refugees continue to receive asylum in the subregion. Within its capabilities, UNAMSIL will continue to provide support to the returning refugees and displaced persons in its areas of deployment.

36. The physical relocation of formerly displaced families is just the first step in the resettlement process. Emphasis now needs to be fully focused on providing support for the establishment of viable community recovery programmes, involving all humanitarian and

development actors and working closely with the Government counterpart agencies. Efforts are being made to establish effective monitoring mechanisms in the main resettlement areas to ensure that community needs are being met and addressed in the most effective manner.

37. Another recovery priority is to stimulate economic revival. In this regard, the Government of Sierra Leone considers the mining sector a significant potential source of economic growth and poverty reduction. However, if the sector is left uncontrolled or if its resources are diverted for personal gain, there is the potential that the country could be destabilized. Arrangements put in place are not fully functional and consequently have yet to yield the maximum returns to Sierra Leone. The Ministry of Mineral Resources, with assistance from the World Bank, the Department for International Development and the United States Agency for International Development is currently preparing a comprehensive post-war recovery programme focusing on two principal objectives, namely, maintaining civil order in the mining areas and establishing a sound regulatory framework for mining and marketing. Sound governance for the mining sector will be emphasized. The Government is currently developing a mining policy and strategy to manage artisanal diamond-mining activity and create an enabling environment to attract private investment for industrial-scale mining. It also needs to quickly improve its operational capacity to monitor and curb illicit mining, as well as pursue the reactivation of leases for industrial diamond mining.

VI. Observations

38. The successful holding of the elections on 14 May marked an important milestone in the Sierra Leone peace process. Coming only four months after the completion of the disarmament process, the elections represent a remarkable step towards lasting peace in Sierra Leone. I wish to congratulate the people of Sierra Leone for turning out to vote in impressive numbers, and in a peaceful and orderly manner. The efforts of the National Electoral Commission, which organized and conducted the elections, as well as UNAMSIL and other international partners, which provided vital security, logistical, technical and financial support, should also be applauded. I also commend the political parties, whose exemplary acceptance of the outcome contributed to the success of the elections.

39. The current calm must endure in order to permit all parties concerned to concentrate on the immediate challenges ahead. In my last report (S/2002/267), I stressed that the elections would not by themselves provide a lasting solution to the crisis in Sierra Leone and that, without well-established Government structures throughout the country and a security apparatus capable of protecting the country from both internal and external threats, the stability achieved in Sierra Leone would remain tenuous. The Security Council, in its resolution 1400 (2002), also emphasized the importance of the continuing support of UNAMSIL to the Government of Sierra Leone in the consolidation of peace and stability after the elections. The prospects for strengthening the fragile peace in Sierra Leone are promising, provided the Government, UNAMSIL and other international partners act quickly and effectively to tackle the priorities set out in the present report.

40. I am, however, concerned about two factors that at this stage pose the greatest threat to stability in Sierra Leone. First is the escalating conflict in Liberia. The increasing incursions by armed elements into Sierra Leone portend a worrying trend. There is a real risk that Liberia and Sierra Leone could be trapped in a vicious cycle, with civil war continuously swinging back and forth between the two countries. It is therefore important for the international community to act quickly to address the conflict in Liberia. In this regard, the ongoing efforts of the ECOWAS leaders and His Majesty King Mohammed VI of Morocco, aimed at promoting a ceasefire and reconciliation among the Liberian parties, as well as building confidence among the leaders of Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone, deserve the support and encouragement of the international community. I therefore urge the Security Council to take concrete measures in support of these efforts, which I expect to be reinforced by the United Nations Office for West Africa when it becomes operational.

41. The second is the challenge facing the Sierra Leone army and police in their efforts to develop their capabilities to effectively assume responsibility for the country's security after the eventual departure of UNAMSIL. A clear definition of Sierra Leone's national security plan, including an indication of what needs to be done for the army and the police to be able to sustain the stability created by the presence of

UNAMSIL, is crucial to the planning for the drawdown of the Mission. The efforts of the Government of the United Kingdom and the International Military Advisory and Training Team have gone a long way towards preparing the Sierra Leone Army to assume its national security responsibilities, as have the efforts of the Commonwealth and UNAMSIL with respect to the police. However, both institutions still face formidable shortcomings, particularly in terms of infrastructure, logistics and the Government's capacity to sustain them. With regard to the police, I recommend that the 30 additional United Nations civilian police personnel that were deployed recently to support the elections be retained in UNAMSIL. Their continued presence would strengthen the Mission's capacity to support the training of the Sierra Leone police. As a matter of urgency, a way must be found to significantly expand and improve the capability of the force to a level at which it can maintain law and order without the presence of UNAMSIL. The newly elected Government cannot achieve this in a realistic time frame on its own. It is therefore necessary to put into place special measures to accelerate the process.

42. In the ongoing planning for the drawdown of UNAMSIL, the Government's capacity to maintain external and internal security without international assistance will be the principal benchmark. In the assessment of UNAMSIL, a gradual drawdown of the Mission should be commensurate with the prevailing security conditions and the Government's capacity to match them. These conditions will depend on many factors, including the potentially destabilizing effects of the situation in Liberia, the steps to be taken by the Government to effectively extend its authority throughout the country and to re-establish effective control over diamond mining, and the reintegration of ex-combatants.

43. As part of the process of consolidating the peace, and in preparation for a reduced international presence in the country, it is particularly important for the newly elected Government to begin to assume the leading role in addressing the challenges ahead. The international partners should, however, continue to provide the necessary support. In this regard, I wish to emphasize the need to urgently provide the resources required to finalize the uncompleted aspects of the peace process, especially reintegrating ex-combatants, effectively extending State authority throughout the country, and promoting justice, the rule of law and national reconciliation. The building of the capacities of the police and the army will also continue to demand a substantial quantity of resources from the international community. At the same time, the Government will need to act quickly to enhance its capacity to generate revenue and contribute resources for these priorities.

44. Despite the magnitude of the challenges ahead, there is no doubt that there exists a potential for success in Sierra Leone. In order to realize this potential, the international community must stay the course and protect the major investments that have made possible the progress achieved so far. For its part, the Government of Sierra Leone must deliver the peace dividend to the people and address not only the consequences of the war, but also its root causes, including corruption, human rights abuses, highly centralized Government structures and neglect of the developmental needs of the population in the provinces.

45. In conclusion, I wish to express my appreciation to the Security Council and troop-contributing countries, as well as ECOWAS, for their support for UNAMSIL, which made the election milestone possible. I also wish to congratulate my Special Representative and all UNAMSIL military and civilian personnel, as well as the Government of Sierra Leone, for this remarkable achievement. I particularly commend the various military contingents of UNAMSIL, which, using their own resources, have achieved so much in improving the lot of the people of Sierra Leone through community projects and the provision of medical facilities where none would otherwise exist.